

Not Just Any Old Word'll Do

THIS PUZZLE CONSISTS OF FIVE WORD CHAINS. Each entry in the chain differs by one letter from the preceding one. The letters may be in a different order, however. The first entry has none of the letters contained in the last entry. The second will have one, the third two, and so on. A yellow square indicates that a letter also appears in the final word, though in a different position, while a green square indicates a letter that matches its position in the final word.

The five final words form a pertinent message.

To make things a little more challenging, the clues aren't in order. The box below provides hints for those who don't want the challenge.

There are two proper nouns—well, two and a half, as there is one that's part of a double definition clue (one definition is a proper noun and one isn't). Everything else is playable in Scrabble. Ignore punctuation, which is intended to deceive.

Thanks to Bob Fink, Eric Klis, and Jerry Miccolis for test-solving and editorial suggestions.

First Chain

- Joint overwhelmed by thin gents
- Drove with no resistance—our underpants
- Curt, Thor's maniacal
- Barb, north's not how you usually find it
- Gizmo for less than a quarter of a penny
- Being mercurial for Saturnalia

Second Chain

- Obtuse triangles have interior coordinates knowable at the outset
- Little parasites getting seconds
- Pans with red handles

- Accounts of sword dancing
- Like a dog and pony show for an IPO
- Baby carrier worn by store clerk

Third Chain

- Truly eerily quiet
- Pans with yellow and violet
- Makes one subtracting error with ounces and pints
- Sit tight if Mary finally leaves in shame
- Resort in European country
- Stops to question frivolous suit

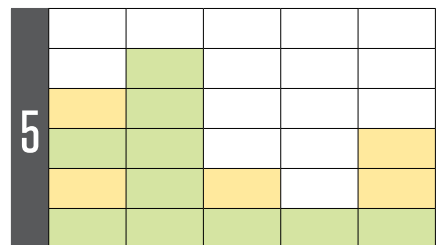
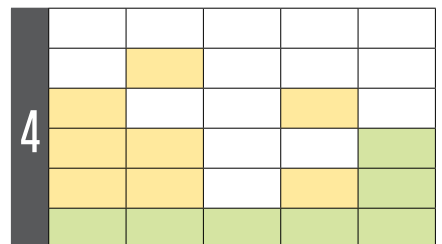
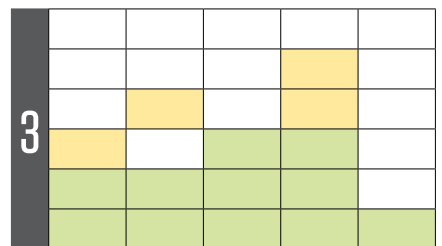
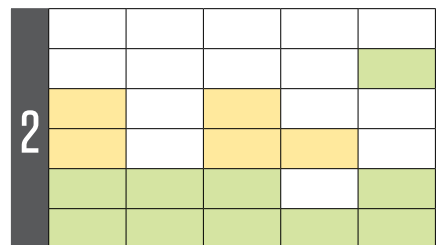
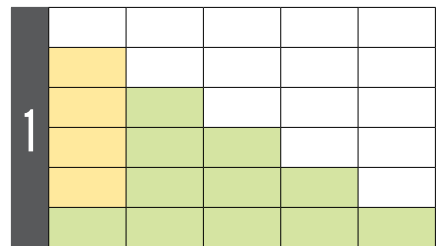
Fourth Chain

- It can be augmented with art I'd lined up
- Hearty deputy loses heart getting held up
- Accordingly, paltry servings in a stew
- Green is one for parity, I expressed
- Rod is dressing up for Singer Day
- Send a message to god—god of the Romans

Fifth Chain

- His poems are epic and cover all the bases
- Doug vies to sample every other comforter
- Marginal makeover for Shaker affiliate
- Drove aimlessly!
- Change arising from humor phobia
- Granted, Ted goes after a certain kind of brandy

Message:



HINTS

First chain: 2, 4, 6, 5, 3, 1

Second chain: 1, 2, 5, 6, 3, 4

Third chain: 6, 1, 4, 3, 2, 5

Fourth chain: 3, 4, 6, 5, 1, 2

Fifth chain: 5, 1, 4, 3, 6, 2